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Gifted World Literature

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Who am I?

It is 7:00 on a Monday Morning. I reluctantly rise, with animosity towards the commencement of a new school week. I brush my teeth, splash some water in my face, gaze into my mirror, and ask, “Who am I?” Before I lose myself in answering this question, I push it to the back of my mind for later and proceed to my morning shower. Encompassed in the serenity that only a lukewarm shower can offer, my thoughts run aimlessly until they encounter another question: “Who do I want to be?” A long list of careers run through my mind and by the time I regain focus, I am already behind schedule. I jump out of the shower, get dressed, and hastily consume a bagel before dashing outside to my golf cart. Five minutes into the commute, as I am running stop signs and careening around blind curves, I begin to wonder if all of the stress that comes with school is really worth anything to anyone. “Who am I?” “Who do I want to be?” “How do I make a positive contribution to the world?” While other students may see this assignment as an obligation, I graciously accept this as a much needed opportunity to take time and answer these questions for myself.

Who am I? My answer to this question is typically subjective to who is asking. For example, if someone from the class of 2013 were to ask me who I was, I would identify myself by name and further elaborate by informing them I am Somto’s brother. However, by answering identities like brother and son, I feel their importance ebb away after I tell so many people. This is because, although it is possible to be especially compassionate towards family members, I cannot be truly passionate about belonging to a family. Contrarily, I am intensely passionate about two things that provide immense enrichment to my life: athletics and technology.

Running mile after mile in conditioning for cross country, I was enamored with the extensive golf cart paths of Peachtree City, and began to truly appreciate the vivacious flora and fauna that lived on their sides. Running cross country helped me develop an unbreakable devotion, almost as strong as my family ties, to my coach and teammates, and pushed me closer to my full mental and physical potential. To claim that technology merely provides immense enrichment to my life was an understatement: I am a technophile. My first spark of enthusiasm can be seen as far back as 2000; when my peers were playing Twister, I was demolishing all competition on the Super Nintendo. Around 2004, the fire grew brighter when I obtained a Playstation 2, and by the end of freshman year, the year in which my parents purchased a laptop for me, the entire forest was ablaze.

Whenever friends of my parents ask me what I want to be when I grow up, I instantly feel 10 years younger: I do not have the slightest idea as to what occupation I want to hold. Consequently, I took a different approach in answering the question “What do I want to be?” In the future, I imagine myself running half and full marathons to maintain physique while relentlessly pursuing a doctorate in computer science at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. At this point, I hope to have programmed for both the Windows and Linux operating systems, and to have built my own custom operating system. In this image, I see myself as the master of my world, a leader both inside and outside of my graduate program. People ask me how I can be so sure of actualizing these goals; with the love and support of my parents and extended family, and the insurmountable power of an ambitious man with something to prove, I fail to see any likely scenario in which I do not become this person.

“I am driven by two main philosophies; know more today about the world than I knew yesterday and lessen the suffering of others. You’d be surprised how far that gets you”. These words, spoken by Neil DeGrasse Tyson, perfectly verbalize my most potent motives for pushing through school. I hope that one day, I can produce technological innovations that alleviate the burdens of everyday life for not only the upper and middle classes, but also the less privileged members of societies in both developed and underdeveloped nations.

In discovering who I am, what I want to be, and how I want to influence this world, I have managed to connect with myself on an inconceivable level, and gained a taste of what Maslow would call “self-actualization”. It is 11:45 on that same Monday, and I have successfully completed the most arduous of school days. I retire to my bed, close my eyes, and surrender myself to some much needed sleep, knowing that Tuesday is a new day.